

At one with wood

by Anne Cook

The Nimbin Artists Gallery's artist of the month for April is the very creative sculptor Rob Sheather.

Rob is an experienced carpenter who has worked for many years in the building industry.

Rob relocated from Sydney via Jervis Bay to Nimbin around five years ago and found that immersing himself in nature, together with Nimbin's creative vibe really started him thinking in a productive and inspired way.

While Rob has no formal training in sculpture, he started his practice by collecting interesting and unusual pieces of fallen timber and driftwood and working primarily in a bas-relief style.

This is a sculpture technique in which figures or other images are just barely more prominent than the overall background.

Rob likes to use all types of native timbers common to the Northern Rivers, depending on what he finds at the time, however his preference is for red cedar which he says is easy to use because of its lightness and workability. Currently, Rob is undertaking a large number of pieces in yellow



stringybark.

Rob's working process can be varied, starting out sometimes with a chainsaw and working his way down to fine details with a hammer and chisel.

The structure and conformation of the timber suggests to Rob what the image will be like and that is the direction he takes.

As someone who likes to "think outside of the square", Rob has embarked on a new line of work whereby he turns what he views as an under-utilised resource such as bamboo into imaginative stand-alone lamps.

These funky light sources would live up any room and provide inspiration for most interior designers.

If you would like to catch Rob's work, come and visit us at the Nimbin Artists Gallery in Cullen Street, we are open 7 days a week from 10am to 4pm.

Phone 02 6689-1444 or visit: www.nimbinartistsgallery.org



20-year photo odyssey

by Ruth Tsimbinis

'Spaces and Time' is Ben Belle's first solo exhibition, concentrating on depicting the beauty, diversity, mystery and surreal nature of the world around us.

This exhibition is a selection of photographs taken over a 20-year journey to different parts of our world. The project is an essay on humanity and its place within the world. Each image tells its own unique story – stories that are at one end of the spectrum, dark, gritty, melancholic, and lonely, and at the other end beautiful, inspiring, colourful and bright.

Together this collection explores the breadth of possibility on our planet through the lens of the spaces we inhabit. Exploring the interplay of light and dark, bitter and sweet, comforting and confronting;

all the while maintaining a sense that the world we live in is a truly beautiful and awe-inspiring place.

Through this body of photographic work, Ben hopes to transport the viewer into the spaces he experienced in his travels over the past 20 years. These photographs capture a unique perspective of the lives, places and moments encountered on his journeys.

Ben believes that more than ever, people are reflecting on the value of everyday surroundings and the impact these surroundings have on our lives. 'Spaces and Time' is an exhibition that will help to articulate this realisation and speaks to the profoundness and mystery of the world around us.

'Spaces and Time' will be on exhibition from 8th April until 1st May at Roxy Gallery, Kyogle.

Exploring sacred landscapes

There are two exhibitions at Blue Knob Hall Gallery, both under the exhibition name of Sacred Landscapes.

Sacred Landscapes encompasses anything from the internal to the external world. Literally or metaphorically, there is a large range for interpretation.

We have many sacred places: outside, in the landscape, with its flora and fauna; and inside, in our homes, which are full of personal sacred spaces, and the many precious things that inhabit them.

Some might argue that the Gallery is also a sacred space, and home to many groups. The most recent of these is Blue Knob Writers Group. The Group formed in early 2020 and has developed into a collection of writers from all walks of life, both aspiring and published.

Late last year they approached the Gallery about launching their anthology *Sacred Landscapes* and exhibiting artworks – some from the anthology and some specially commissioned – in The Solo Space.

They also proposed that the Gallery collaborate with the same theme for the members and artists of the Gallery. This was enthusiastically welcomed and is a first for the Gallery since The Solo Space was first made available. The collaboration has added depth and coherency to the choice of works and their mediums, and has resulted in some wide-ranging interpretations of the theme.

There has also been a sense of excitement and anticipation as we are keen to see how connected we are as artists to the minds of the writers; as at the time of writing neither the Blue Knob Writers Group nor the artists of the Gallery have seen or read the other's work. Copies of the anthology will also be available for \$10.

These exhibitions will be open from Thursday 28th April with an Opening Night and Book Launch on Friday 29th April at 6.30pm. Dinner will be available from 7pm with a set menu. Bookings will be essential for dinner.

The next Artists & Friends lunch will be on Thursday 31st March at 12.30pm.

For more information, please contact Blue Knob Cafe at: bkgcafe@gmail.com or: bkhgallery@harbourisp.net.au or phone 02 6689-7449.



'Three Tree Hill' by Jacqui Readett, writer and artist



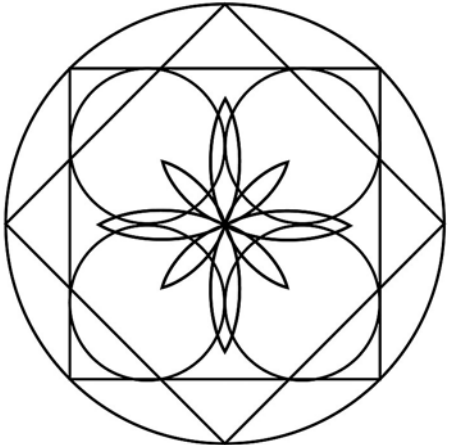
'Giant Kelp Forest' by Amanda Doran

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Creek erosion and landslips: what can I do to reduce the risk?

by Claire Delacey
and David McMinn

The recent deluge has caused havoc across the Northern Rivers. Property loss and road disruption has been rife.

This provides us with an opportunity to not only rehabilitate what's been lost, but to build landscape resilience against future high rainfall events.

Much of our local landscape was extensively cleared about 100 years ago to establish agriculture and pasture grasses.

However, banana and cattle production have gone into decline in more recent times, leaving many areas vulnerable to the spread of lantana and other weeds. Many of these

species are shallow-rooted and retard the regeneration of native species.

Very few landslips have occurred on undisturbed terrain with intact native vegetation cover.

A combination of broad fibrous-rooted species along with deeply-anchored tap-rooted species holds the soil together well.

Most landslips occur on steep slopes just below the tree-line of naturally-vegetated hillslopes, or in steep open paddocks with little tree cover.

Many watercourses have also been particularly hard hit. Natural vegetation which would have slowed the passage of water across floodplains has been extensively removed.

A combination of tree,

shrub and groundcover species contribute significantly in reducing sediment-loaded run-off from steep slopes.

Casuarinas and a range of early colonising species, such as wattles, are nitrogen-fixing plants and improve the soil fertility to support the establishment of a much wider range of native plants.

Importantly, regeneration of stream banks and the steeper slopes should be sympathetic to local ecosystems and only local native species should be grown. Avoid exotic species which could spread uncontrollably.

Plantings for watercourses

Riparian zones are generally subject to strong water scouring, so would naturally be dominated by species capable of tolerating harsh

conditions. Much of this protective cover has been replaced by the invasive camphor laurel.

Table 1 lists a range of tree species which are suitable for planting along watercourses to help resist erosion. They achieve this by consolidating the creek bank and slowing down the speed of the flooding waters.

If revegetating the exposed banks of creeklines, select strongly anchored sedges and rush species, such as Juncus or Carex species, as these species have thick, fibrous roots or underground stems such as tubers and rhizomes which help to slow the momentum of water.

If revegetating in frost-prone areas such as frosty creek flats, initial plantings should consist of frost resistant species only.

As they grow and form

a protective canopy, other more cold-tolerant species may be included in follow up plantings.

Importantly, planting trees along creek banks will slow the water flow as desired, but may cause floodwaters to spread out over creek banks and cover a wider area.

Reducing the risk of landslip

Planting big trees is an excellent way to reduce the likelihood of landslips. The roots penetrate deeply into the soil and thus help bind the slope.

There is an added benefit as the large trees help soak up surplus water in the soil profile.

To avoid further soil loss, tree branches can be laid along the slopes' contours. This effectively traps mobile sediment, debris and seed,

whilst providing a stable and nutrient-rich bed for seed germination.

Cracks and fissures running along contours should be regarded as vulnerable areas and the threat of landslips along such slopes can be reduced by planting along contours.

Remember that planting Eucalypts (and other members of the Myrtaceae plant family) will increase your fire risk and are best sited well away from buildings and fire escape routes.

If you wish to retain your views, plant tall trees at the base of the slope and then plant progressively shorter species as you revegetate up the slope.

Table 2 lists species suitable for consolidating slopes to reduce the risk of landslip. **Please note: Tables at left are clickable in our on-line edition.**

Table 1. Species suitable for growing along lower slopes of creek banks		
Species	Habit and Growth	Comments and Propagation
<i>Acmena smithii</i> Lilly Pilly	Tree to 10m. Warm temperate rainforest. Suitable for planting along rocky creek banks, where it can cope with floodwaters. Moderate growth.	It quite versatile and handles wet soils (but not overly acidic), light frost and sun or shade. Cuttings strike readily.
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i> Weeping Bottlebrush	Tree to 6-10m. Subtropical and warm temperate rainforests, as well as wet sclerophyll forest.	Frost hardy. Propagation from seed or cuttings.
<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i> River She-oak	Largest of the casuarinas to over 20m. Tends to grow in narrow belts along waterways subject to periodic flooding.	Excellent holding the creek banks in times of flood. Propagation from seed.
<i>Casuarina glauca</i> Swamp Oak	Rapid growth to 20m. Swamp oak and swamp sclerophyll forest.	Propagation from seed.
<i>Elaeocarpus grandis</i> Blue Quandong	Rapid growth to 30m. Riverine and moist creek flats. Subtropical and warm temperate rainforests.	Plant along permanent creeks or in moist sites (not swamps). It is ideal to establish a quick canopy to protect slower growing rainforest species. Can be setback by frost when young. Cuttings strike easily. Store seed in damp plastic bag until roots appear or crack seed open and plant for germination.
<i>Ficus coronata</i> Creek Sandpaper Fig	Tree to 10m. Occurs in rainforest along the banks of streams in protected or exposed sites.	Grows rapidly in moist sites along creeks. Cuttings strike readily.
<i>Livistona australis</i> Cabbage Palm	Palm to 20m. Rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest.	Slow to become established. Frost tolerant even when young. Propagation from seed.
<i>Syzygium australe</i> Brush Cherry	Shrub or small tree to 4m, but much taller under favourable conditions. A widely distributed species, often found growing along creek banks.	Full sun or semi shade. Frost tolerant even when young. Propagation from seed.
<i>Tristaniopsis laurina</i> Water Gum	Tree to 10m. Grows along creek banks.	This species grows into old gnarled specimens after withstanding many floods. Excellent to prevent soil erosion. Propagation from seed.
<i>Waterhousea florabunda</i> Weeping Lilly Pilly	Moderate growth to 18m. Rainforest. Usually found along stream banks.	A very attractive tree with semi weeping branches. Likes plenty of water, but will not tolerate sour or poorly drained sites. Withstands a light frost. Propagate from seed and cuttings.

Table 2. Species suitable for consolidating slopes on slightly more elevated sites		
Species	Habit and Growth	Comments and Propagation
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i> Sally Wattle <i>Acacia maidenii</i> Maiden's Wattle <i>Acacia implexa</i> Hickory Wattle	Trees to 12-20 m. Margins of wet sclerophyll forest and warm temperate rainforest.	Suitable for planting along mid to upper slopes. Fix nitrogen from the atmosphere. Grows readily from scarified seed.
<i>Alphitonia species</i>	Fast growth to 12 m. Subtropical and warm temperate rainforests and wet sclerophyll forest.	Excellent in initial plantings to create a quick canopy. Hardy in full sun and tolerant of cold conditions. Must have good drainage. Propagation from seed.
<i>Arumcacia cunninghamii</i> Hoop Pine	Slow growth when young. Once established, grows to 30m. Wide-ranging habitats: dry, riverine and littoral rainforests.	Once established, the tree is resilient to adverse conditions. Deep roots allow this tree to hold steep slopes firmly. Propagation is generally from seed.
<i>Archontophoenix cunninghamii</i> Bangalow Palm	Palm to 20 m. Grows in subtropical and warm temperate rainforests, as well as wet sclerophyll forest.	Can be quite fast growing in moist/wet soils. May be swept away by floods when young. Takes some frost when established. Grow under the protection of large trees in areas prone to heavy frosts. Propagation from seed.
<i>Castanospermum australe</i> Black Bean	Tree to 15 m. Subtropical and warm temperate rainforests and wet sclerophyll forest.	Suitable for planting along mid to upper slopes of watercourses. Propagation from seed.
<i>Elaeocarpus grandis</i> Blue Quandong.	Rapid growth to 30 m. Subtropical and warm temperate rainforests.	Plant in moist sites only (not swamps). This tree is ideal to establish a quick canopy. Can be setback by frost when young. Propagate from cuttings or seed.
<i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> Flooded or Rose Gum <i>Eucalyptus saligna</i> Blue Gum	Rapid growth to 30-40 m. Native to wet sclerophyll forest.	Very fast growing trees, which will quickly consolidate river banks. Need well drained soils. Suitable for planting along mid to upper slopes of watercourses. Propagate from seed.
<i>Eucalyptus microcorys</i> Tallowood	Tree to 40 m. Sclerophyll forest	Suitable for planting along mid to upper slopes of creek banks. Grows poorly on red soils. Koala tree. Seed propagation.
<i>Eucalyptus saligna</i> Blue Gum	Tree to 35 m. Tall forest tree of slopes and ranges in wet sclerophyll forest	Suitable for planting along mid to upper slopes of watercourses. These are rapidly growing and excellent for stabilising steep slopes, if you have room for very large trees. Must have well drained soils.
<i>Ficus macrophylla</i> Moreton Bay fig <i>Ficus virens</i> White Fig	Moderate growth to 15 m. Native to rainforests.	The expansive root system is excellent for protecting river banks from erosion. Need plenty of room as they will grow into very large trees. Fruit provides forage for wildlife. Propagation from seed.
<i>Flindersia schottiana</i> Cudgerie	Tree to 30 m. Grows in subtropical and littoral rainforest	Suitable for planting along mid to upper slopes. Propagation from seed.
<i>Grevillea robusta</i> Silky Oak	Moderate growth to 30 m. Riverine, subtropical and dry rainforest environments.	Suitable for planting along mid to upper slopes of watercourses. Propagation from seed.
<i>Pinusporum undulatum</i> Native Daphne	Tree to 15 m. Early coloniser along edges of sub-tropical and warm temperate rainforests. Also in sclerophyll forests.	Suitable for planting along mid to upper slopes of creek banks. Tolerates some exposure.
<i>Podocarpus elatus</i> Brown Pine	Tree to 15 m. Eucalypt and rainforest.	Can be slow to establish. Prefers fertile moist soils. Propagation from seed or cuttings.
<i>Rapanea saviablis</i> Muttonwood Tree	Tree to 12 m. Early coloniser on the edges of subtropical, warm temperate and littoral rainforests.	Suitable for planting along mid to upper creek slopes. Tolerates some exposure.

by Richard Burer

Recent events have shown that healthy native forests and vegetation, in particular riparian vegetation, go a long way in slowing water and helping prevent erosion in heavy rainfall events.

Of course, recent events have seen old forests slump and slip away with an altered environment no match for such a rain event.

Many slips we see, say along the Nimbin Road for example, were historically degraded from removal of forests for agriculture like bananas, dairy and beef cattle, and less diverse and in many cases non-native forests or mixed forest replaced original endemic vegetation.

For example, while Lantana is a good protector of bare soil in the short term, it's a myth that it prevents erosion long term. Where access is possible, managed native vegetation regeneration in small steps is a long-term



solution, but it's no easy task and our governments need to stand up. In particular, the federal government, where successive coalition governments have gone missing on environmental management.

Along our riparian zones, no amount of hard work and tree planting would have withstood this rain event, however well-planned tree plantings on recent inspections have in many cases survived.

Endemic, hardy, fast-growing riparian species such as River Oak, Black tea tree, Red gum, Swamp box, White and Red bottle brush can withstand the impacts of water inundation, and even your young planted trees can pick themselves back up with a bit of help after flood.

Riparian floodplain tree plantings slow water down, and is best practice floodplain environmental management to help ease the impacts of flood events.

Creek regeneration plants

by Vanessa Pelly

In our devastating recent flood event, it wasn't just human homes that were lost, our riparian areas were hard hit, meaning loss of homes for many fauna species.

As I drive around post-flood, I can see areas decimated and other areas not unscathed but comparatively intact.

My observation is that where established and appropriate landcare has been undertaken, these creek banks and zones have fared better.

A personal example is Websters Creek. After East Coast Low “Debbie” hammered my creek banks and over-spilled and flooded across the paddock,

I went in and replanted with tenacious rainforest species.

That was five years ago and this time, although the creek did burst its banks, it didn't cause nearly as much damage as Debbie. Hale *Lomandra hystrix*!!

Sensible plantings of appropriate species can change the way water moves through the landscape, to a certain degree.

Below is a list of species to consider replanting your creek banks with to help stabilise and to stop further erosion.

- *Lomandra hystrix* (Mat-rush or Creek Lomandra)
- *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (River She- oak)
- *Callistemon viminallis* (Weeping

- Callistemon)
- *Ficus coronata* (Creek Sandpaper Fig)
- *Ficus fraseri* (Sandpaper Fig)
- *Elaeocarpus grandis* (Blue Quandong)
- *Castanospermum australe* (Black Bean)
- *Ficus macrophylla* (Moreton Bay Fig)
- *Ficus rubiginosa* (Rusty Fig)
- *Flindersia schottiana* (Cudgerie)
- *Acmena smithii* (Creek Lilly-illy)
- *Glochidion ferdinandi* (Cheese Tree)
- *Cunninghamiana* (Bangalow Palm)
- *Tristaniopsis laurina* (Water Gum)
- *Syzygium austral* (Brush cherry)
- *Syzygium francisii* (Francis' water gum)
- *Elaeocarpus obovatus* (Hard Quandong)
- Also don't forget rushes, sedges and bank runners such as *pollia crispata*.
- For more site-specific information, ask your local bush regenerator or nursery.



by Peter Brooker

At last in February, a garden, but as a storm swept in from the west and raged through our valleys, I think many of us wondered not what Angela's garden might look like, but if it had survived.

The storm passed when, as Maya Angelou suggests, it ran out of rain and the wind became a breeze. When we arrived en masse at Angela's – there were 42 of us – we saw the magnificence of her garden had most certainly survived despite sitting on an exposed ridge in Koonorigan.

Angela has been at the property for 38 years and is the third owner. The home, built in 1943, and its garden stand on just under an acre and the easiest way to describe it is to say it doesn't have a Giant Canadian Redwood tree but has everything else.

When Mary Cantrell said, "Gardeners dream bigger dreams than emperors" she was thinking of Angela. She describes herself as "a lazy gardener" because what she weeds out of the garden she places on the boundary as habitat.

When she arrived there were four orange trees, a rose bush and a flooded gum. Now there are (take a breath, a deep one, deeper) paper daisies, desert roses, strawberries, native dahlias,

cumquats, Japanese peach trees, Kiwi fruit, Cape gooseberries, mangoes, plums, black sapote, an apple tree that produces tropical delicious, paw paw, pineapple, brown Turkish, white Genoa and green figs, hibiscus, bell chillies, gardenias, a bottle tree, lime tree, black agapanthus, African tulip, Yacon (eat the roots), bromeliads, black and white bat plants, cat whiskers to attract bees and Pamelos – apparently the skin of the fruit is good for our skin, washing hair and repelling moths.

I have saved the best until last. Angela has picked 9kg of olives from three trees, enough grapes for 15 bottles of wine and has an elderberry, the last shrub from a well-known hardware store, from which she hopes to get more wine in the future.

Angela has separate areas in which she grows her gardens, divided by lawn pathways. She grows ornamentals and vegetables in the same patch, so you might find garlic between your desert roses.

She throws "bits of everything" in the garden and "if it grows it grows". From what we observed, it appears to grow every time.

Our thanks to Angela for the informative tour of her garden.

"If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."



by Peter Brooker

Well, when we thought the storm that raged through our valleys before the February Garden Club might have caused significant damage to our gardens we had no idea what was to come.

When the rains returned to this place of rivers we saw first-hand what a woman scorned is capable of, as Mother Nature unleashed her dogs of wrath in response to inaction and ignorance.

Our hearts go out to those so devastatingly affected by this event but we can take some solace from the fact that we are promoting beauty and encouraging the planting of shrubs and the protection of trees.

Ogilvy wrote, "And day by day as he thundered by, there is ground to be captive led, and night by night where the low lands lie, are the wings of his army spread."

So we were indeed fortunate that the garden of Les and Tony at 259 Stony Chute Road, on Saturday 19th March remained relatively unscathed and 35 members of the club could be shown around in warm sunlight and a cool breeze.

Les described her and Tony's attempts at gardening as 'hit and miss', but it appeared they hit more than they missed.

Les went on to say they had inherited the mature trees when they purchased the 12 acre property four and a half years ago but since our last visit, in about 2018, they have planted a garden in front of the house which apparently obscures an unattractive wall, and a bed of tropical plants further away.

They had also put in what Les described as 'a pergola thing' near the pool and some steps toward the back of the house. Amongst the pre-



Marc Le Bars, the founder and facilitator of the breakfast club, Kerry Hagan, president of Nimbin Garden Club and Mia Webster, community liaison officer

existing gardens they have planted a variety of shrubs and, between the house and the horse paddock, a new garden was created to conceal a necessary drain at the base of the hill.

That garden is self-watering and well fertilised by the horses in the adjacent paddock. The driveway has 15 Cocos Palms running on one side – they have removed 25 others – and a magnificent Tallowwood.

Add to this the Sugar Gliders, Swallows, Parrots, Wedge-tailed Eagles and a pretty courtyard with plants spilling down to hide yet another wall Les doesn't find attractive and you have a tranquil home.

Their 12 acre lot was carved out of the original farm of 100 plus acres and is surrounded by the remaining 80 or so. Tony described it as them being the hole in the doughnut and added the garden is now mainly only maintenance.

Our next meeting will

be at the home of Cherie and Russell, 6 Neem Road, Jarlanbah on Saturday 23rd April between 2 and 4pm.

Bring a cup, a chair and a plate to share. Parking is available at the community hall opposite.

Breakfast Club

Nimbin Garden Club has donated \$500 to the Nimbin Central school for their fabulous breakfast club.

The breakfast club is now feeding most of the students each day with a wholesome breakfast before school and Garden Club is proud to be able to donate to this great cause.

Principal, Cath Marshall tells me that the kids get off the bus in the morning and head straight for the breakfast canteen, where they are now able to have fresh juice and fruit along with a full array of breakfast delights.

Thanks Marc for all your hard work in making this possible.



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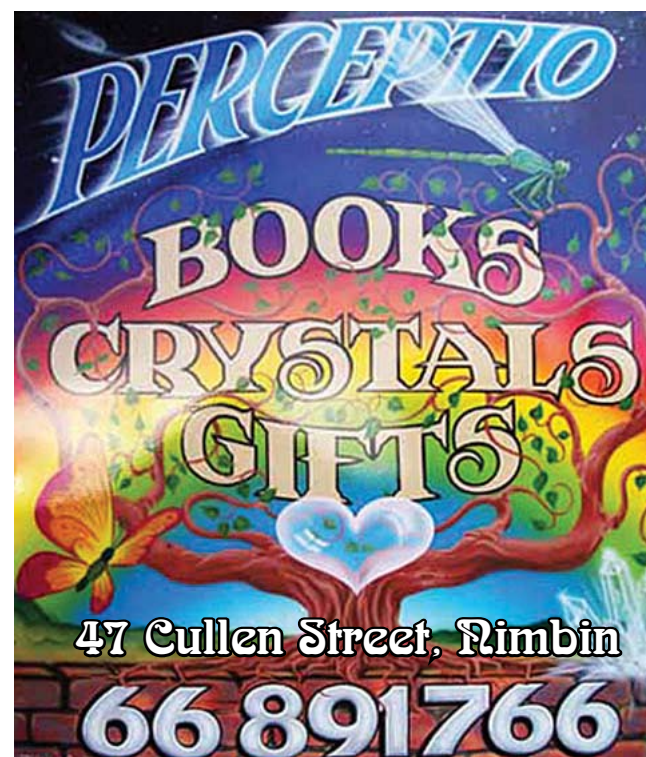
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Energy exchange: How we connect with other living beings

by Donna Connolly

Have you ever felt someone's "vibe", walked into a room and known something is "off"?

Everything is made up of energy, creating a unique frequency and vibration. You may be a sensory person, an intuitive, empath or a combination of all of these. However, there will be a dominant way that you process and experience the world on an energetic level. The more you work with this part of yourself, the more other capacities and capabilities become available to you.

Whether you are physically present, or telepathically communicating with an animal or being, your body is likely to experience an energy shift, such as a tingle somewhere, something feeling different, hot or cold sensations.

At this time it is so important to have a clear, centred mind, opened heart and grounded body if you want to consciously communicate with other species.

Receiving information may be

in the form of thoughts, images, colours, emotions, feelings, physical sensations, or words. It can be subtle, intense or anywhere on the spectrum.

Connecting may even bring up a memory for you; there is a reason for this. We are like tuning forks, every life experience is held within us, so if tuning into an animal or a person triggers this part of you, it's relevant.

It may be a quick way of showing you the answer to a question, rather than the whole story, just the impression. It may relate to how that previous situation made you feel, giving you a feeling perspective of the animal.

The "clairs" help us explain in human terms what is happening to ourselves as we tune in and experience these messages. We all process and receive energy in differing ways, depending on who we are and our varied life experiences. Sometimes there is a clue in the job or hobbies you have.

Clair-voyance/Images can be colours, still pictures, a Zoom call, or a like a movie being displayed on a screen. This is usually experienced



by artists, designers; people who work with images.

Clair-cognisance/Thoughts tend to come through like reading a book, they can be the hardest to accept as we question whether it is us or another source of info, also can be ideas and a deep knowing. The key to this one is if it comes through superfast, almost unprompted, and carries unexpected, surprising information, it can be trusted. Usually people who work with words and have

active imaginations have this trait.

Clair-sentence/Emotions and feelings can seem to come from out of nowhere; can be flashes or can be lasting and residual. Mostly experienced by empaths, compassionate people in caring roles, nurses, rescue workers, healers or/and people who have had to adapt survival skills in childhood.

Clair-aliance/Smell is a huge part of how we interpret info; often subconsciously dogs in particular have a highly evolved sense of smell and often try to communicate this way. Sometimes in a mediumship reading an unexpected smell may come to you, such as cigarette smoke as a verifiable trait of the person.

Clair-gustance/Taste and texture can be fun and daunting at times, especially if an animal is showing us their favourite food, and the crunches, smells and flavour that come with it, eg chicken necks, offal. People in hospitality, chefs, and sommeliers have a gift for this.

Physical Sensations/Somatic. This is where you experience sensations in your body,

discomfort, tingles, heat, cold areas, lumps, bumps, pressure points, blockages etc. As a healer, I use this to decipher where the animal or person is feeling discomfort or distress. I refer to this as bio-feedback; people who usually pick up this info are healers, also parents' intuition.

Animal Communication course

Our on-line Animal Communication Course is booked out! We have received a lot of interest in holding a Daytime version. We only need a minimum of four people to make this a viable option. (Thursdays 10-11.30am).

This Course is highly interactive and fun, including:

- 5 x 90-minute Zoom calls
- Animal Communication with instant verification;
- The opportunity for you to receive messages from your own animals;
- Weekly emails with intuitive exercises and tips;
- Plus a bonus 60-minute 1:1 mentoring call!

Connect with us today if you would like more details: rivergem88@gmail.com

The weather has been a total shock

by Peter Moyle

The incredible weather has been a total shock to all of us, and our sympathy goes to all that have lost so much in these dreadful times. The resilience of those affected shows great spirit and we have so much admiration and respect for your endeavours.

From our membership we have only had one house flooded as well as some cars. Many of our members have been out and about helping where they can. A bit of nature therapy and bonding with friends has seen us back out re-charging ourselves.

The first walk just before the floods, had us going back to Minyon Falls in The Whian Whian State Conservation Area.

This would be the North Coast's most popular National Park walk, and the newly refurbished parking/picnic area always gets plenty of visitors and the stunning falls are always well worth the view.

We set off early to miss the crowds and even though it was a cloudy, showery start to the day, things improved considerably and the sun did return when we made it to the base of the falls before changing again on the climb out.

The track could do with an upgrade as it is quite uneven and slippery. To do the circuit, a creek crossing is needed, and care needed when rock hopping across or as some just waded through. The recent rain made this a great day out with the falls raging and the rainforest at its best with the lush colours and dripping waters highlighting the foliage.

A walk that most reasonably fit can undertake, so give it a go or watch out when the Nimbin crew does it again and join in the adventure of group walking.

Walks program
Sunday 10th April
Mount Chowan – Mt Jerusalem National Park
Leader: Russell Colefax 0407 135167
Grade: 4. 11km approximately 4 hours. There are steep sections involving rock scrambling and if it has been wet some trail slippery. Walking boots/shoes needed, and walking poles or a good pole helpful.
Meet: 9.15am at the trailhead off North Chowan Road which is off Smiths Creek Road between Stokers Siding and Uki. This is a combination of a steeper bush trail and fire trail walk. With views across to the Border Ranges and on the way up to Mt Chowan a great view of Wollumbin. We will have an early lunch on the walk and for those interested afternoon tea at nearby Uki.

Sunday 8th May
38/38 and the Hidden Valley – Whian Whian State Conversation Area
Leader: Peter Moyle 0412 656 498
Meet: 9am Rummery Park camp area near Minyon Falls in the Whian Whian SCA. We were out this way earlier in the year and have decided to return to these beautiful valleys. There will be some scrambling over

rocks and some steep climbs up and down, suitable for experienced walkers only. If in doubt, ring Peter for advice.
Bring: lunch, and hat. Good walking footwear essential.



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Our amazing community

by Les Rees

The recent weather events in our region has caused a catastrophic mess, many have lost their homes, businesses and loved ones. It's sickening to hear so many horrific stories from those caught up in the rising floods. Yet in the midst of it all, our amazing community switched into emergency mode, taking on some horrific challenges to find ways to help and console one another.

I'm constantly surprised by the speed at which our communities can leap into action to help during emergencies. The true blue nature of the Aussie spirit is nothing short of amazing.

It's a principle borne out of necessity, because if you want something done quickly, you have to be prepared to roll up your sleeves and muck in.

We're constantly shaking our heads in wonder as to why it takes so long for the grinding wheels of our governing bodies to react. They're so busy with protocol and procedure that it takes forever for them to react to emergencies. In the meantime, our communities have managed to galvanise themselves and have helped one another to survive.

During the terrible



bush fires in the Tasman Peninsula, Tasmania in 2013, the only roads in were closed due to problems with fallen electricity lines which left the people living there effectively cut off. Many homes were destroyed and evacuation centres quickly filled with people who had nothing but the clothes they were wearing.

Much to the annoyance of local government, it was the community that made sure that people were clothed and fed. Those who had boats were loaded with provisions which were supplied by the community and taken by sea to various locations where needed.

It took several weeks before the roads were finally opened. This is another

example of community spirit.

A lot of animals have suffered during the flood inundation, many being left with injuries, disease and trauma, whilst others perished unable to escape the waters.

My heart goes out to the many volunteers who have been working tirelessly at animal evacuation centres and foster homes.

Again the community banded together to retrieve animals and organise feed convoys. Many of our veterinarians have been working tirelessly treating the sick and injured where they can.

This can be a very unpleasant task, for many had to be euthanised.

Animal Justice Party MP Emma Hurst claimed the government had been unprepared for the scale of the floods, stating, "The government has clearly failed to prepare for emergency situations like this. A chronic lack of government funding for animal rescue services and mobile vet clinics has left many animals with painful, untreated injuries and families stressed about lost animals."

Australia is known for its extreme weather events yet we still don't have any proper action plans in place to enable a positive response.

The LNP government's constant denial of climate change and reckless ambivalence in ignoring scientific evidence is nothing short of suicidal, the effects of which our children will have to bear.

In the meantime, the community will continue to act selflessly, magnanimous in their efforts to help those battling against the odds.

For anyone wishing to volunteer, there's still plenty of work to be done.

If you're unable to volunteer, there are plenty of agencies that need donations, or you can simply be there for those who need to spend some comforting time with another person.

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Caring for horses in the wet

by Suzy Maloney, B.Eq.Sc.

It's hard to find words to fully describe what has just happened and is continuing to happen in the Northern Rivers. My heart aches for all those people and animals who have suffered because of the flooding.

As the community works hard toward the future, now is a time when many require healing on all levels – physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. My love and blessings go out to all.

Hopefully by the time this goes to print, life is starting to return to somewhat normal and the horses are past the worse, with major wounds and trauma being well on the way to healing.

So many animals suffered dreadful leg injuries due to underwater fences and debris, I sincerely hope all are healing well. There are also smaller issues that can happen with horses in wet conditions, this is what I'll be addressing here.

No doubt many of you have already experienced some of these, but I hope there will be something in the list that may help you with on-going care.

- ♦ **Cuts and wounds** – check horses regularly and treat with an antiseptic. Watch for swelling or heat that may indicate infection as this can develop rapidly in wet and humid conditions.
- ♦ **Mud Fever and Greasy Heel** – Horses may develop either of these, especially where the skin is pink. It looks sore and scabby and can be painful for the horse. Greasy heel is

found behind the pasterns and mud fever on the lower legs. I trim off excess hair such as feathers to open the area to sun and air. Massage zinc cream into affected areas, but don't pick the scabs off as this creates open wounds that may get infected. After applying the zinc cream for a few days, the scabs slough off as you rub it in, this is a safe way to remove them.

- ♦ **Thrush** – Black smelly stuff down the sides of the frogs. Clean it out with a hoof pick then flush with hydrogen peroxide (a syringe without the needle works well).
- ♦ **White Line disease** – Also called seedy toe when in the toe. Clean out the area with a shoeing nail or other small tool, flush with hydrogen peroxide, then pack with copper sulphate (I mix it with Vaseline to pack the hole).
- ♦ **Abscesses** – Often the result of sole bruising (from soft, wet soles) or compromised white-line, allowing micro-flora in. There are many opinions on how to manage abscesses, the following is mine. I don't confine the horse to a stable, but in a small paddock; they need to walk around for it to pop. It may help to call your farrier for an assessment and confirmation of your diagnosis. Then I wait, this is the hard part as they may become very lame. Once it pops, the pressure and pain is released and they feel better quickly. Preventative measures are cleaning then spraying/painting the sole of the hoof with a dilute solution of copper sulphate in water or apple cider vinegar. And

being vigilant with white-line disease treatment.

- ♦ **Swollen legs** – many horses develop swollen legs from standing around in wet weather. The best thing to help this is any form of exercise.
- ♦ **Rain scald** – Despite how it looks (dandruffy scabby areas on the body) this is bacterial, not fungal, making it easier to eradicate. Wash with a medicated shampoo or betadine solution, leave 10 minutes then rinse. Rug during rain if possible.
- ♦ **Bites** – Flies, mosquitoes, midges, and other delightful biting insects are out in hordes after a big wet. Covering horses with protective rugs or spraying with insecticides helps.
- ♦ **Feed** – Be careful of giving feed that may have spoiled or gone mouldy. Horses cannot tolerate mould in the feed and may become very ill. Pastures may need time to recover from flooding. Also, when there's been a lot of rain the grass is mostly water. If by some miracle you have access to dry hay, feed some out daily to put dry high-roughage feed in the gut.

Horses are great at letting things go, but some extra care and loving will go a long way. Some of them have lived through huge and stressful experiences. Long pampering grooming sessions, extra cuddles and special time together will help both the horses and us.

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